Secondary Units Online Survey: What We Heard

An online survey was conducted from June 28 to July 13, 2018 on the City's “Get Involved Kingston” web platform. This survey included questions asking participants' perceptions on the topic of second residential units, including proposed changes to the second residential unit permissions. 196 people completed the survey, of which 57 (29%) were interested in creating a second residential unit. Additionally, 39 (20%) of survey respondents were interested in living in a second residential unit.

Next Steps

All comments received from this survey have been reviewed, and all statistical data has been analyzed. This document provides a snapshot of the survey results. In conjunction with the results of the public meeting held on July 5, 2018, staff will now improve the proposed second unit regulations before bringing forward a combined public meeting and comprehensive report to Planning Committee.

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At a Glance Summary

- 32% of respondents would have concerns if their neighbour wanted to build a second unit within their existing home.
- 43% of respondents would have concerns if their neighbour wanted to build a detached coach house
- 28% of respondents believe that one parking space should be required for each second unit. 25% felt that one was too many while 10% felt one parking space was not enough.
- 53% of respondents believe coach houses should be permitted in both urban and rural areas.
- 50% of respondents felt a coach house should require more than just a building permit and that they should not be constructed as-of-right. 39% believed that a building permit was sufficient.
- 47% of respondents believed that 4.6 metres was an appropriate maximum height for a coach house. 20% felt this was too tall while 14% felt this was not tall enough.
**Second Residential Units: New Permissions**

**Q1** Are you interested in living in a second residential unit?

- Yes: 135 (68.9%)
- No: 39 (19.9%)
- Don’t know: 22 (11.2%)

*Option question (196 responses, 0 skipped)*

**Q2** Are you interested in creating a second residential unit?

- Yes: 114 (58.5%)
- No: 57 (29.2%)
- Don’t know: 24 (12.3%)

*Option question (195 responses, 1 skipped)*

**Q3** Would you have any concerns if one of your neighbours wanted to build a second residential unit inside their (single detached, semi-detached, row or linked) home?

- Yes: 14 (7.1%)
- No: 62 (31.6%)
- Don’t know: 120 (61.2%)

*Option question (196 responses, 0 skipped)*
What We Heard

**Bylaw Enforcement:** There are concerns that the creation of more second units will result in an increase of bylaw violations related to noise, garbage, and property maintenance.

**Street Parking:** We heard that second units could increase on-street parking or illegal parking in front yards of homes. There were concerns that this could impact traffic and the ability for others to park on the street, particularly if there is more than one occupant or more than one car associated with a second residential unit.

**Neighbourhood Character:** There are concerns that the addition of second residential units to traditionally single-family neighbourhoods could have an impact on the character of the neighbourhood. It was noted that this change could increase density levels beyond what was expected when they purchased their home. Some respondents were comfortable with second units in other areas of the City, but not their own neighbourhood.

**Safety:** Concerns regarding the safety of the second units, particularly if built in a basement prone to flooding or if they are constructed without proper building permits and fire approvals. There are also concerns that second units may deplete water supplies in rural areas.
**Occupants:** We have heard concerns about the type and number of occupants who may reside in a second residential unit. Some respondents felt it was important for the owner of the building to live on-site.

**Design Elements:** There are concerns that the setback and height regulations for coach houses are both too restrictive and not restrictive enough. Privacy loss and obtrusive overlook could result from a coach house. We heard that the size of a coach house would be better tied to the size of the lot than the size of the footprint of the principal dwelling.

**Public Process:** Some respondents were concerned that second units, particularly coach houses, are proposed to be developable as-of-right without a planning process and a chance for the neighbours to voice their concerns.

**Coach Houses:** We have heard concerns from some respondents who believe coach houses are not appropriate for the City of Kingston.

**General Support:** Respondents have noted how expanded second unit permissions may help deal with the affordable housing challenges in Kingston. Urban intensification, densification, and infill are also mentioned as positive outcomes of second units.

**Conclusion**

We would like to thank all of the respondents who participated in the second residential unit survey, and who have expressed an interest in this issue. While we continue to process the information we have received, additional comments and thoughts are welcome. Please continue to visit this webpage for further updates.